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Viewing cable 09MANAGUA541, GOVERNMENT MANUAL SEEKS TO SILENCE CIVIL SOCIETY

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09MANAGUA541**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09MANAGUA541	2009-06-01 22:53	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758464.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4103/la-embusa-y-el-gabinete-de-ortega>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4104/d-rsquo-escoto-en-onu-ldquo-un-desafio-de-ortega-a-ee-uu-rdquo>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4102/estrada-y-la-ldquo-doble-cara-rdquo-ante-ee-uu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-discrecion>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

VZCZCXRO7877
PP RUEHLMC
DE RUEHMU #0541/01 1522253
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 012253Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4186
INFO RUEHMU/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0181
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 0044
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY 0067
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0121
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 0505
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0271
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY 0013
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0063
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0181
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0233
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHBVJPX/COMPHIBRON SIX PRIORITY
RHBPCOM/USNS COMFORT PRIORITY
RHBPCOM/MEDTRE FAC COMFORT PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 000541

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/31/2019

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SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT MANUAL SEEKS TO SILENCE CIVIL SOCIETY

REF: 08 MANAGUA 1308

Classified By: Ambassador Robert J. Callahan, for reasons 1.4(b) & (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Ortega government is drafting a new manual that it states would facilitate the administrative process for international non-government organizations (NGOs) to operate in Nicaragua, but admits the manual will make clear that foreign funds should not be used for "political purposes." The government's undefined interpretation of "political" has many NGOs worried, and with good reason. In speaking to a group of NGOs, Vice Foreign Minister Valdrack Jaentschke admitted the purpose of the new manual was political and not administrative, noting the government just wanted NGOs to provide infrastructure projects and stay out of governance and other issues. A draft of the manual has circulated publicly and local NGOs already have begun to voice their opposition. Unfortunately, as with most matters, the Ortega administration might ignore civil society's concerns and bulldoze through to its intended objective. End Summary.

The Manual

¶2. (C) A draft of the government's manual for "streamlining the administrative process" for international NGOs has circulated publicly in Nicaragua, and immediately raised concerns that the Ortega administration seeks to silence civil society groups it views as opposition groups. Specific language of concern in the manual includes:

- Abstaining from participating in any political activities of a partisan character, including the use of the organization's resources, goods, and installations.
- Abstaining from participating in activities that attempt to

influence legislation.

- Prior to receiving approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to operate in country, the organization needs to provide the list of projects it will conduct.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs along with the foreign NGO will jointly audit ("fiscalizar") the distribution of the NGO's resources.
- The foreign NGO's counterpart should be a legally established organization, and the funds cannot be used for partisan purposes.
- The composition of professional or technical experts in the foreign NGO shall not be less than 90% Nicaraguan and foreign experts cannot be greater than 10%.

¶3. (SBU) While the manual is directed at international NGOs, local organizations are conscious they too will be affected. As a principal source of funding for many local associations, limiting the scope of work of international NGOs will have a direct effect on local organizations that work in the area of governance, elections, or similar "political" issues. Luisa Molina, spokesperson for the Coordinadora Civil (a network of local NGOs), described the manual as the continuation of the government's persecution of civil society begun last fall (reftel). Carlos Fernando Chamorro, president of the Center for Media Research (CINCO in its Spanish acronym) and a victim of the government's fall persecution, described the government manual as a tool the Ortega administration would use to limit the citizenry's freedom of association, freedom of mobilization, and freedom to affect or influence public

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policy.

It's Political

¶4. (C) Given the Ortega government's past interpretation of Nicaraguan law (reftel), an immediate concern from international and local NGOs is that the manual is political and will prohibit any projects in political party development, electoral assistance, the promotion of transparency and good governance, and many human rights issues. Marcos Carmona, Executive Director of the Nicaraguan Permanent Commission for Human Rights (CPDH), stated that one of their internationally funded programs was to support municipal level committees that promote good governance and feared the new manual would essentially prohibit these activities. Carmona's and others' fear that this manual is political in nature is well founded.

¶5. (C) Minister of Government Ana Isabel Morales told local media that the government wanted NGOs to provide social benefits to the population and stay out of politics. Vice Foreign Minister Valdrack Jaentschke stated it more clearly. (Note: Jaentschke is the government's lead official responsible for the manual.) According to the representative of a European NGO consulted by the government on the manual, Jaentschke told the NGO that the manual had a political purpose and not an administrative one. The government, Jaentschke said, wanted NGOs to help with infrastructure products and stay out of issues such as governance.

Comment

¶6. (C) The Ortega administration has constantly viewed civil society groups as part of the opposition that attempts to "destabilize" the government. As such it has always sought to limit these groups' activities by publicly discrediting them in government-affiliated media, harassing them administratively (e.g., sending tax inspectors to review files), or concocting trumped-up judicial charges (reftel). With the manual the government now seeks to formalize a process by which it can filter civil society's actions and

eliminate any group or activity that will challenge the government's positions. The response from foreign donors and civil society will now be instrumental in preserving the citizenry's ability to continue to have a say in its government.

CALLAHAN